

Message Text

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ACTION IO-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8680
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LIMDIS

PASS WHITE HOUSE

PASS LABOR FOR SECRETARY MARSHALL, HOROWITZ AND ILAB

PASS COMMERCE FOR SECRETARY KREPS AND UPTON

IO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES, DALLEY AND PALMER

S/IL FOR DALE GOOD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ILA PLAB
SUBJ: 63RD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE:
THE ISSUE OF U.S. MEMBERSHIP IN ILO

1. SUMMARY: WE HAVE TOLD ILO MEMBER COUNTRIES THAT THE
RESULTS OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR
CONFERENCE (ILC) WOULD BE CRUCIAL TO OUR FINAL DECISION
ON MEMBERSHIP IN ILO. IN EFFECT, WE ASKED THEM TO DECIDE
WHETHER THEY WANTED A TRADITIONAL ILO WITH US IN IT OR A
POLITICAL FORUM WITHOUT THE U.S. WE POINTED THE ISSUES
ON WHICH THEY COULD EXPRESS THEIR PREFERENCES, AND WE ASKED
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FOR ANSWERS AT THIS SESSION AND NOT IN THE FUTURE. THE
REPLY OF THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS (THE G-77 AND THE
COMMUNIST BLOC) WAS CLEAR; THEIR FIRST PRIORITY WERE
THE POLITICAL ISSUES. WITH APPARENT NONCHALANCE ABOUT

FUTURE U.S. PARTICIPATION, THEY FRUSTRATED MAJOR U.S.
OBJECTIVES AT THIS CONFERENCE AND ATTACKED THE FUNDAMEN-

TAL WORK OF THE ILO. FOR THE U.S., THE NEGATIVE RESULTS OF THE ILC MEAN THAT UNLESS WE WITHDRAW FROM ILO, OUR CREDIBILITY IN ILO AND IN THE ENTIRE UN SYSTEM WILL BE VIRTUALLY ZERO. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS SOME OF THE ATMOSPHERICS AT THE CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ISSUES --- SINCE OUR LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW, U.S. POLICY IN ILO HAS IN ESSENCE BEEN TO ASK MEMBER COUNTRIES WHETHER THEY WOULD JOIN US IN TURNING THE ORGANIZATION BACK TO ITS BASIC PURPOSES AND AWAY FROM A DUPLICATION OF THE POLITICAL SCENE AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WE HAVE TOLD THEM THE EVENTS OF THE 63RD ILC WOULD BE CRUCIAL TO OUR DECISION TO REMAIN IN OR TO LEAVE ILO. OUR OBJECTIVES AT THE ILC WERE CLEAR: WE ASKED THAT (1) THE 1974 RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAEL BE BURIED AND ARTICLE 17 OF THE STANDING ORDERS BE AMENDED TO REFLECT THE PRINCIPLE OF NO CONDEMNATION WITHOUT INVESTIGATION; (2) THE NEGOTIATIONS ON STRUCTURAL REFORM BE HANDLED AT AN INFORMAL LEVEL LATER THIS YEAR; (3) THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE BE RESTRICTED TO ILO ISSUES AND NOT BE A RERUN OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND (4) THE CONFERENCE DIWOWN THE DOUBLE STANDARD AND ENDORSE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF ITS COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS.

3. THE ANSWERS --- IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. APPEAL FOR
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DEPOLITIZATION, THE ILC WAS MESMERIZED FROM THE START TO THE LAST DAY BY A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN IMEC AND THE G-77, THE LATTER LED BY THE EGYPTIANS AND SUPPORTED BY THE COMMUNIST BLOC. THIS MAJORITY USED THEIR VOTES TO THWART ALL U.S. OBJECTIVES. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES WAS DELAYED FOR SEVERAL DAYS BECAUSE OF ARAB AND G-77 INSISTENCE THAT THEIR CANDIDATE CHAIR THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE, WHICH AT THAT TIME WAS EXPECTED TO DEBATE THE FOLLOWUP OF THE 1974 ISRAELI RESOLUTION. IN A FORCED AND UNPRECEDENTED VOTE, THE ARAB CANDIDATE WAS ELECTED (ILC CHAIRMEN ARE DESIGNATED IN INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE CONFERENCE OFFICERS AND THE LEADERS OF REGIONAL GROUPS), AND THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE PROCEEDED TO FILIBUSTER IN ORDER TO AVOID ANOTHER POLITICAL ISSUE: A PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION (MODELED ON THE 1974 ISRAELI RESOLUTION) CONDEMNING THE U.S. FOR RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE CANAL ZONE. THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND ARTICLE 17 OF THE ILC STANDING ORDERS WAS CONSIGNED ON THE THIRD DAY TO THE ILC STRUCTURE COMMITTEE WHERE IT (AND TWO OTHER WESTERN PROPOSALS) WAS HELD CAPTIVE TO PROGRESS ON G-77 DEMANDS TO "DEMOCRATIZE THE ANTIQUATED ILO STRUCTURE." THE SOLE

AGREEMENT WAS TO REVIVE THE MANDATE OF WORKING PARTY ON STRUCTURE FOR ANOTHER YEAR BUT THE G-77 REITERATED THE THREAT OF A SPECIAL "CONSTITUTIONAL SESSION" OF THE ILC IN 1979 IF AGREEMENT ON STRUCTURAL CHANGE WAS NOT REACHED ON THEIR TIMETABLE. AT ONE POINT IT SEEMED THAT THE LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL HAD DEFUSED THE ISRAELI ISSUE BY REITERATING HIS DUTY TO REPORT TO THE ILC ON RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS, INCLUDING THE 1974 RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL, AND BY REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS (CAC) AND THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS (COE) WERE SEIZED OF THE ISSUE OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HOWEVER, THE DG'S EFFORT WAS SHOT DOWN ON JUNE 20

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WHEN THE ARAB-LED MAJORITY BLOCKED APPROVAL OF THE CAC REPORT BECAUSE THEY OBJECTED TO THE MATTER BEING HANDLED IN A NORMAL ILO INVESTIGATORY CHANNEL. THUS, THE ARABS INSISTED ON A POLITICAL STANDARD IN THE ILO APPROACH TO CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND IN DOING SO, WILLINGLY REJECTED THE ENTIRE REPORT OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND IMPARTIAL COMPLIANCE MACHINERY IN THE ILO (A MEXICAN MOTION TO SEPARATE THE ISRAELI SECTION FROM THE CAC REPORT AND TO VOTE SEPARATELY ON EACH PART WAS NOT SECONDED).

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4. THE COMMUNIST BLOC - IN CONTRAST TO MUTED SIGNALS
DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE ACTIONS OF EE DELEGATIONS LEFT
NO DOUBT THEY WERE INDIFFERENT TO U.S. MEMBERSHIP. THEY
SAW AND TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY WITH
THE ARAB-LED G-77. NOTEWORTHY IS THE COINCIDENCE OF
THE EE AND G-77 POSITIONS ON STRUCTURE (WHERE THE G-77
"RESOLUTION" ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF "EQUITABLE REGIONAL
REPRESENTATION", A LONG STANDING SOVIET DEMAND IN ILO)
AND IN BLOCKING ADOPTION OF THE CAC REPORT ON JUNE 20.
IN THE LATTER CASE, THE EE BLOC JOINED THE ARABS TO
AVOID THE FULL IMPACT OF THE CRITICAL "SPECIAL PARAGRAPHS)
ON THE USSR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AS DID THE GOVERNMENTS
OF CHILE AND ARGENTINA WHO WERE ALSO SINGLED OUT IN THE
CAC REPORT. THE SOVIET STATEMENT IN PLENARY ILLUSTRATES
HOW THEY EXPLOITED THE ARAB ISSUE TO ATTACH THE INVESTI-
GATORY AND COMPLIANCE MACHINERY OF ILO. IN A LENGTHY
STATEMENT, THE USSR ACCUSED THE CAC AND THE COMMITTEE OF
EXPERTS OF JUDGING "SOCIALIST" AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
BY "BOURGEOIS" LEGAL STANDARDS; IN PLACE OF UNIFORM
APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS, HE CALLED FOR CONSIDERATION
OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES, HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND AND SPECIFIC CONDITIONS.

5. THE G-77 --- UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE EGYPTIAN
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AMBASSADOR, ELS SHAFEI, THE G-77 WAS UNEXPECTEDLY COHESIVE
AND AGGRESSIVE IN OPPOSING U.S. OBJECTIVES. THE
"MODERATE" ARABS, AFTER A STRUGGLE WHICH LED TO ACCEPTANCE
OF THE DG'S LETTER OF JUNE 9, LOST CONTROL IN THEIR GROUP;
THE "MODERATE" AFRICANS AND LATIN AMERICANS APPARENTLY
WERE COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE IN THEIR GROUPS. WORKING
WITH EL SHAFEI IN LEADING THE G-77 WAS A FAMILIAR CAST:
THE REPRESENTATIVES OF SRI LANKA, MEXICO, VENEZUELA,
PANAMA, CUBA, ALGERIA, IRAQ, SYRIA, LIBYA, YUGOSLAVIA,
THE THE EE BLOC. THE STEAM IN THE G-77 WHICH BUILT UP
IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE ILC (FOR EXAMPLE IN THE JUNE 20
VOTE ON THE CAC REPORT AND THE HARD LINE ON STRUCTURE)
MAY HAVE BEEN FIRED BY ALGERIAN (AND PERHAPS
OTHER) PERSUASIVENESS IN THE G-77 IN ARGUING THAT THE
U.S. WAS BLUFFING AND DID NOT INTEND TO WITHDRAW FROM
ILO, AND THAT THE U.S. WAS HIGH-HANDEDLY TRYING TO
DICTATE TO THE ORGANIZATION. HOWEVER, WHATEVER THE
MOTIVATION OR THE GROUP DYNAMIC WITHIN THE G-77,
THE RESULT WAS CLEAR. THE SO-CALLED MODERATES FOLLOWED
THE LEADERS IN GIVING POLITICAL ISSUES THE HIGHEST
PRIORITY AND IN OPPOSING U.S. OBJECTIVES. EVEN MORE
SIGNIFICANT WAS THE DELIBERATE WAY IN WHICH THE G-77
DOWNGRADED THE USE OF THE IMPARTIAL AND VENERABLE ILO

INVESTIGATORY PROCEDURES AND THE OMINOUS ANNOUNCEMENT
OF A TIMETABLE FOR STRUCTURAL REFORM.

6. IMEC --- THE FACT THAT IMEC VOTED WITH THE U.S. WAS A BRIGHT SPOT THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE. EVEN WHEN IT LOOKED AS IF THE U.S. MIGHT FORCE A VOTE IN THE STRUCTURAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARTICLE 17 AMENDMENT -- A MOVE MOST IMEC MEMBERS THOUGHT UNWISE -- THEY ALL INDICATED THAT IN A SHOWDOWN THEY WOULD VOTE WITH US. UNFORTUNATELY, VOTING WAS NOT ENOUGH. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, ONLY THE FRENCH DID ANY

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SIGNIFICANT CORRIDOR WORK. HAD THE MAJOR IMEC POWERS MADE PARALLEL DEMARCHE IN CAPITALS, OR HAD THEY PUBLICLY STATED AN UNWILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS OF STRUCTURAL REFORM, AND CERTAINLY IF SOME HAD LET IT BE KNOWN THEY WERE CONSIDERING WITHDRAWAL, THE U.S. POSITION WOULD HAVE BEEN STRONGER AND MIGHT HAVE PREVAILED. IF WE LEAVE ILO, THESE ALTERNATIVES REMAIN FOR IMEC MEMBERS, INDEED, THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY CONSIDERING THEM IN THEIR POST-CONFERENCE ASSESSMENTS.

7. COMMENT: EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE FRUSTRATION OF U.S. INITIATIVES AT THE ILC IS THE G-77 ATTACK ON ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS OF THE ILO -- ITS INVESTIGATORY MACHINERY AND THE G-77 PROMISE TO "DEMOCRATIZE" THE STRUCTURE OF THE ILO NEXT YEAR. THE ILC WAS SO VIVID AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRENDS CITED IN THE KISSINGER LETTER, WE WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO JUSTIFY STAYING IN THE ORGANIZATION. THE BLOCKING OF THE CAC REPORT ALSO UNDERCUTS THE ARGUMENT THAT IN SPITE OF POLITICAL NONSENSE AT THE ILC, THE TECHNICAL WORK OF THE ILO GOES ON; BECAUSE THE BEST CONVENTIONS ARE MEANINGLESS IF THE MEMBERS HAVE LOST THE WILL TO APPLY THEM. SOME IMEC MEMBERS ALREADY REALIZE THEY WILL HAVE TO GO IT ALONE IN ILO. AFTER THE JUNE 20 VOTE, THE CANADIANS TOLD US THEY DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD STAY IN ILO. SINCE THEN THE U.K. AND NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADORS HAVE MADE SIMILAR REMARKS, AND THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADGR UNDERLINED THE DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTION OF ILO IN A WAY THAT BLANDLY ASSUMED THE U.S. WILL LEAVE ILO. SORENSEN

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